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ABSTRACT

This publication reports on a seminar held over five days which brought together teachers and administrators from the Albany (New York) area schools and colleges and universities to discuss teacher preparation and professional development. Opening sections introduce the seminar, list participants, and detail the six procedural steps that the seminar followed. An introductory essay describes some initial conversations and ideas as the event began, and an important emerging vision of teacher education as a systematic program of life-long professional development in the teaching profession with initial emphasis on practices, skills, and theory and progressively broader and deeper experiences appropriate to teachers' evolving assignments. The next section makes recommendations to improve and enrich the initial training devoted to the preparation of teachers. The recommendations include recognition of a common core of professional knowledge, expansion beyond the traditional 4-year program, linking foundations to practice, and promotion of communication and cooperation among preparing institutions. A section on ideas for the internship phase of training included a series of coordinated steps for colleges and universities responsible for placement and supervision. A section on professional practice covers teacher development as an ongoing process. Final sections include a brief Afterword and an essay by Nelson Armlin "Reflections on the Profession of Teaching." (JB)

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ED 379 226

The preparation of Teachers

report of the select seminar on excellence in education

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The Capital Area School Development Association
School of Education
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november 1994

The preparation of Teachers

report of the select seminar
on excellence in education

The Capital Area School Development Association
School of Education
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State University of New York

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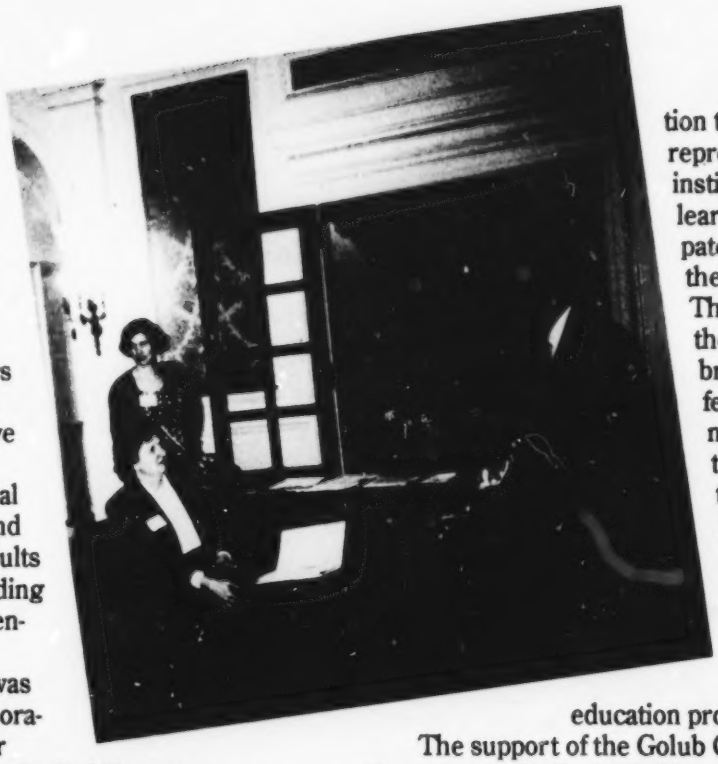
Preface



The 1993-1994 Select Seminar on Excellence in Education focused on the education and preparation of teachers. Representatives from Capital District colleges and universities joined teachers and administrators of local school districts for five full-day sessions to have a conversation about the preparation and professional development of teachers and to write a report on the results of their deliberations including observations and recommendations.

This seminar, which was funded by The Golub Corporation; The Charles Freihofer Baking Company, Inc.; The Capital Newspapers; and the Capital District Physicians' Health Plan, provided a unique occasion for representatives from private and public elementary and secondary education to come together with representatives from the institutions of higher learning to actively participate in discussions about the profession of teaching. This report of the work of the seminar will be broadly distributed to federal and state policy makers and colleagues throughout the education profession. We believe its significance rests not only in its well reasoned discussion, but also on the fact that it represents a collaboration of education professionals.

The support of the Golub Corporation, Capital Newspapers, Freihofer Baking Company, and the Capital District Physicians' Health Plan is a testimony not only to their generosity, but to their recognition of our mutual interdependence.

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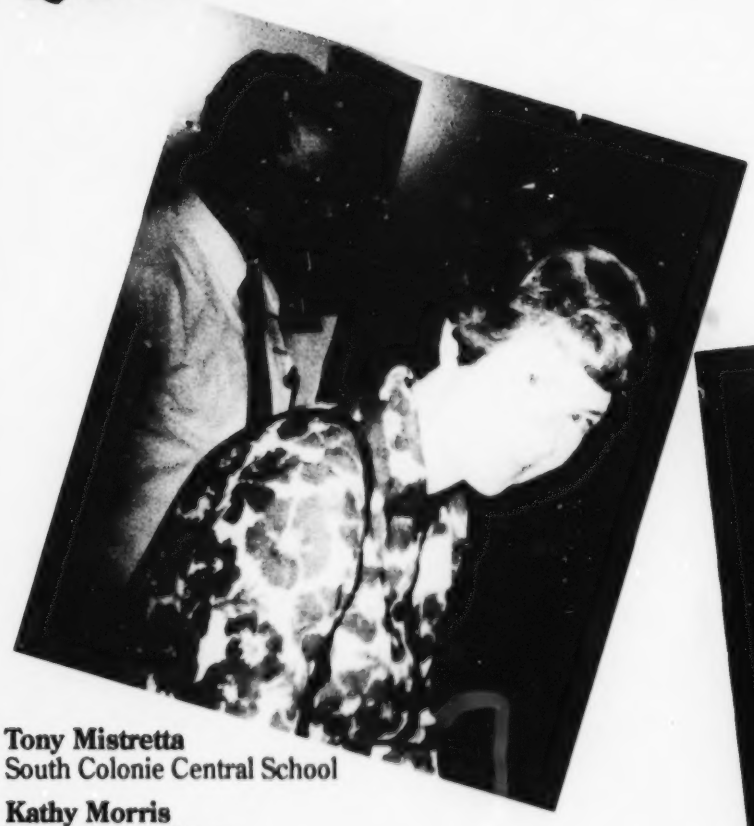

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The Process

The CASDA Select Seminars follow a very simple structure based upon a set of guiding principles:

1. Participants need to commit adequate time—to work, to reflect, and to write.

This Seminar was conducted for five full days spread about a month apart over the first three months with the final session being a two-day overnight retreat at the Rensselaerville Institute in the middle to the end of the fourth month.

2. A conducive working environment is very important.

The Seminars have been conducted in "protected environments" - away from the work site, in quiet and aesthetically pleasing surroundings. We believe this clearly is a first step in communicating to participants that the Seminar is special and there are high expectations that the deliberations of its members will have an important result.

3. The Seminar participants are the experts.

We believe the Select Seminars have been successful because of the high degree of personal and professional respect afforded participants. While participants do extensive reading for the seminars, visiting experts and lecturers are not usually a part of this experience. The individuals who participated in this Seminar represented many years of educational experience. They constituted the body of experts.

4. Roles are "checked at the door."

One's idea must stand on its own, be debated, accepted, or discarded without reference to one's position, prior experience, or education. This Seminar included school superintendents, principals, supervisors, teachers, and college and university faculty members.

5. Seminars are self-governing entities with organizers serving the group.

The coordination of the Seminar was managed by CASDA staff. After providing the initial structure and on-going logistical support, they worked to transfer the governance and direction from themselves to the participants. By the end of the Seminar it is fair to say that it was self-governed with the coordinators taking direction from the Seminar group.

6. The experience is as important as the product.

All Seminar participants agree that the process, the experience, is most important. Even so, the report provides an important documentation of the experience and serves to validate for each of the participants the energy and effort they expended.

It is also hoped that this report will provide inspiration and help to those who read it and may assist in a modest way to continue what has become a very important national conversation on teacher preparation. We firmly believe such an ongoing conversation can only result in better education for all children.

Introduction

"...some people contend there is a lot to know about teaching; others say very little. Some argue that whatever there is to know is easily learned, others say the task is very difficult. Teaching can be learned only on the job, according to some people; there is much to be learned beforehand, according to others. And so it goes..."

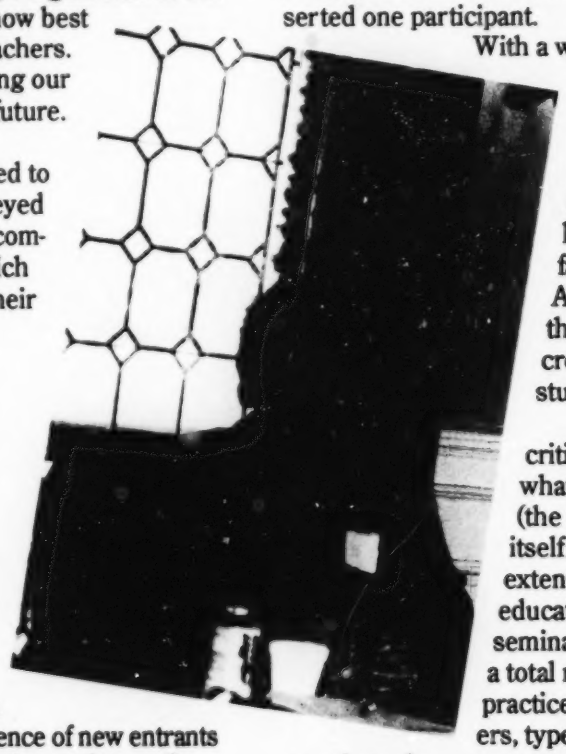
—Philip W. Jackson
The Practice of Teaching

We came in search of a vision, as teachers, young and old, experienced and not so. Representing colleges and universities, school districts, state agencies and professional associations, we gathered in the Select Seminar setting to decide how best to prepare a new generation of teachers. By sharing our pasts and examining our presents, we hoped to define the future.

Thus began the five days of exploration and discovery designed to produce that vision — to be conveyed in a series of observations and recommendations about the ways in which teachers might best prepare for their profession. Early discussions devoted considerable attention to definitions and finding common ground.

Initially, we agreed that the art of teaching is important and the making of teachers is a purposeful and worthy act, not a socio-economic expedient for institutions and not an accident of choice by individuals fortunate to have a college degree.

As educators, with a common interest in the sources and competence of new entrants to the profession, participants voiced a need to work diligently to establish a framework for what a teacher must be and how a teacher is viewed in society.



"We need the best, the brightest and the most caring...who have the capacity for empathy for underachievers, unmotivated, reticent, hostile, obnoxious, scared kids and overworked single parents...," asserted one participant.

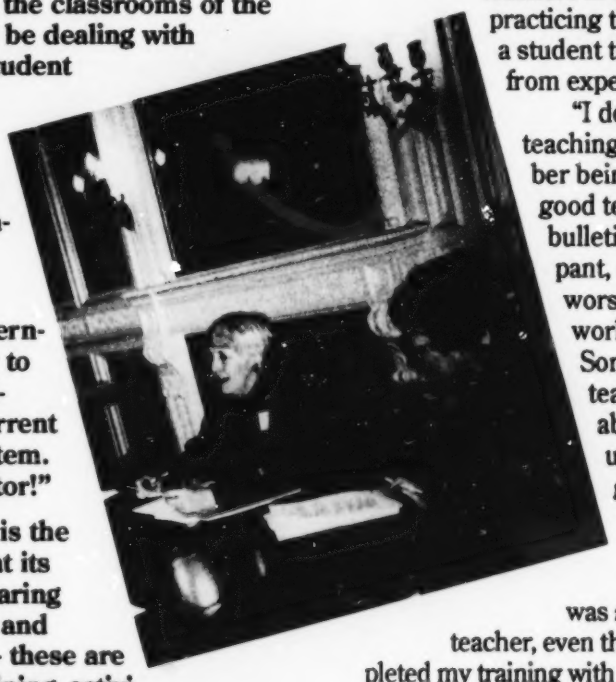
With a world so very different from even 15 years ago, today's teacher candidates, tomorrow's teachers, have pressing problems to address, including, but hardly limited to, single parent families, drugs, alcohol and AIDS. It is within this context that we expect teachers to create an environment where all students want to learn.

"We must, therefore, give critical and extensive attention to what we want our final product (the new teacher) to be — that in itself is a vital issue given the extensive problems and changes in education today," another in the seminar asserted, echoing a call for a total review of basic preparation, practice schools, co-operating teachers, types of experience, etc. But cautioned one veteran teacher, we have to be extremely careful not to abandon successful current practices and over-structure the process.

As discussions wandered between reasoned exposition and passionate discourse, participants revealed the personalities, histories and perspectives that would shape the work to be done.

Voices were pragmatic and poetic.

"When I imagine the classrooms of the future...where we will be dealing with much more diverse student populations which learn in radically different ways, I am confident that traditional teacher preparation needs serious revision."



"The full year internship model is the way to go. Abandon the traditional half-hearted current 'student-teaching' system. Mentor, mentor, mentor!"

"Education itself is the essence of humanity at its best. Thinking and sharing thoughts, discovering and sharing discoveries — these are joyous and life sustaining activities. We must insure that these are education — and teachers must have the power, the understanding and the means to insure that education — true education — takes place."

Yet the group was quick to acknowledge some of the attitudes inhibiting movement in this direction. For example, if we wish to recruit the best and the brightest undergraduates to the teaching profession, then we must change the perception that educators are somehow less worthy, even in the university academic community, than those individuals engaged in research or private enterprise.

Further exchange revealed each participants' personal/professional background — the genesis of his/her own unique perspective. Whether a teacher of teachers in a college or university or a practicing teacher in the field shepherding a student teacher, each expressed opinions from experiences.

"I don't remember my pre-student teaching background, but I do remember being told that I would be a really good teacher because I was good at bulletin boards," recalled one participant, continuing, "I was the world's worst student teacher. I was the world's worst first year teacher. Somewhere along the line the older teachers took all of us who came in about the same time that I did under their collective wings and guided us, mentored us, voluntarily."

"As I looked back upon my teacher training I realized that I was *not* prepared to be a first year teacher, even though I had successfully completed my training with rave reviews," offered another.

What finally was clear, as preliminary explorations evolved, was the early consensus that teacher preparation must not imply an end-product — a "finished" teacher, a place to arrive at — but rather a systematic program of life-long professional development in the teaching profession, with initial emphasis on practices, skills and theory, and progressively broader and deeper experiences appropriate to developed teachers' evolving assignments.

And, much as the idea of the "finished" teacher was eschewed, so too was the view that one agency or institution could accomplish such a task. Instead, participants called for the creation of a "community of educators" — cooperating teachers, college teacher educators, school administrators — involved particularly in preparing people to enter the profession. This group might then provide further nurturance to practicing teachers throughout their careers.

A significant point expressed was the urgent need for conversation between and among all those groups who participate in "preparation" and "in-service" for educators.

Such conversations must be initiated in collegiate and university settings as the foundations are developed for what must be a lifetime of professional training.

In this Select Seminar one such conversation began.

Foundations

One group worked to define the ideal training program for the teacher of tomorrow, devoting considerable effort to the foundation requirements upon which this program would be built. For the purposes of this discussion, we have defined foundations as those courses designed specifically to provide a background for entrance into the teaching profession.

Equally important as articulating those requirements, is their support and maintenance by all involved in the preparation and continued development of teachers. Keeping this principle in mind, participants made the following recommendations to improve and enrich the initial training devoted to the preparation of teachers:

Recognize A Common Core Of Professional Knowledge...

The message articulated throughout the Seminar was emphasized again during the foundations discussions:

Each entity preparing teachers needs a coherent and common vision of what a teacher is and can do — regardless of the teacher's discipline or the level at which he/she teaches.

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Participants frequently referred to the "medical" model of professional training which through its

foundation courses and internships produces doctors with a universal language and background.

This was illustrated by one university professor in our gathering who told about a meeting of five doctors from different medical specialties. A noted heart specialist described a particular condition to the assembled group and then asked them to draw what he had described. The result: five similar drawings. Educators, our professor indicated, don't seem to have this common preparation.

The group identified three main areas of training which should be required in the preparation of a competent professional teacher:

- ✓ **The liberal Arts and sciences to deliver academic content;**
- ✓ **Educational theory and practice to develop skills in content, pedagogy and research;**
- ✓ **Field experiences to provide practical applications as well as exposure to professional issues.**

From the jumping off place of a rigorous liberal arts background, the student should encounter the subject matter and instructional organization giving shape to the profession, the educational theory and practice providing the true foundations of a teaching curriculum.

Again, while there was some difference among the group about specific foundations courses, as well as when and how they might be delivered, the group was emphatic in its agreement that this foundation must be delivered to all future teachers.

What these foundations courses must convey include:

- ✓ **educational psychology**
- ✓ **history of education**
- ✓ **philosophy of education**
- ✓ **social, moral, political issues in education**

Other important areas identified:

- ✓ **learning theory**
- ✓ **assessment**
- ✓ **collaboration strategies**
- ✓ **computer literacy**
- ✓ **writing across the curriculum**
- ✓ **modern foreign language fluency**
- ✓ **interdisciplinary teaching**
- ✓ **communication strategies**
- ✓ **organizational understanding**

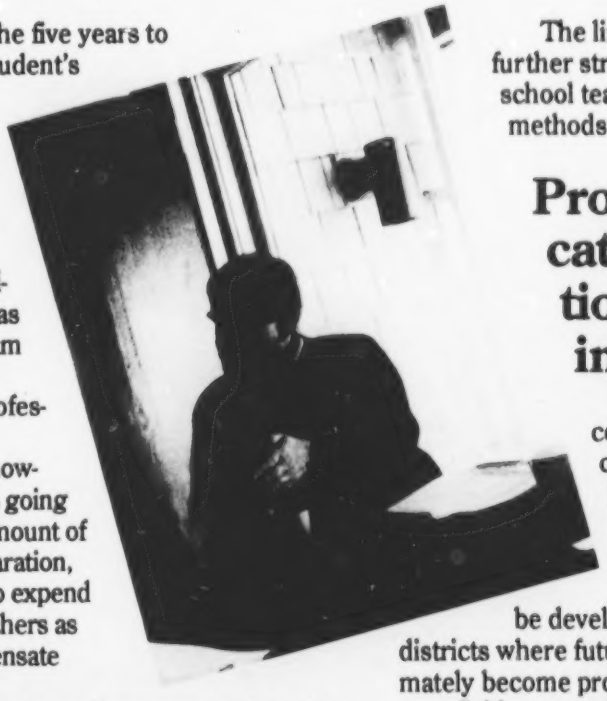
Several participants firmly believed that an undergraduate degree in a subject area should be a prerequisite for all teachers. Training in pedagogy and theory could then begin at the graduate level and continue from that point.

Yet others advocated beginning professional field work early on with multiple examples of course work and theoretical applications taking place in several different school settings during the undergraduate years. This appealed to the many who emphasized that entrance into the classroom for prospective teachers should happen early in their preparation.

Expand Beyond Four Years...

With uniform recognition of the depth and breadth of course work and actual hands-on training necessary to prepare today's teachers, the group agreed that teacher education must be extended beyond a four-year program. A five-year course garnered most support. One suggestion for how those five years might be

spent allotted three of the five years to course work within a student's content area, with the last two years devoted to "job preparation," including the necessary methods courses, observations, and student teaching experiences. More support was given a five-year program devoting the fifth year exclusively to a paid professional internship.



The group noted, however, that if a person was going to spend an expanded amount of time and money in preparation, our communities need to expend more recognition to teachers as professionals and compensate them accordingly.

Even so, this group adamantly pronounced teacher preparation was *not* to be viewed as complete at the end of the BA or MA, whether training occurred over four, five or six years time. Asserting that learning as a teacher goes on forever, this group sought to give the business of teacher training a more descriptive title, calling it not pre-service or in-service, but rather continuous service preparation.

Giving structure to this concept, some supported an on-going certification system in which all teachers would be required to recertify every five years through additional professional development courses.

The link between theory and practice is further strengthened when practicing public school teachers are used to teach or co-teach methods courses.

Promote Communication and Cooperation Among Preparing Institutions...

Whatever these foundations courses might ultimately be, they cannot be developed in a vacuum. Not only must all institutions of higher education involved in teacher preparation agree on just what these courses are, they must be developed collaboratively with school districts where future teachers will prepare and ultimately become professionals.

Said one participant, "There is a crying need for the different providers of services to aspiring teachers to get themselves, if not on the same page, at least in the same chapter."

Colleges and universities must develop and maintain strong continuous, meaningful connections to the schools with ideas and criticism flowing in both directions and a serious institution-wide commitment to the preparation of teachers.

Ultimately, cooperation and communication between and among those institutions preparing teachers is essential when the pre-service teacher moves beyond foundations study and does, in fact, enter the classroom as the pre-service teacher or intern.

Link Foundations to Practice...

Participants frequently cautioned that foundations, uniform or not, must be linked to practice. One group emphasized that pre-service training is, by definition, learning out of context, and, as such, can only attain marginal success in preparing individuals for what is facing them in the future.

Context must be the classroom, and entrance into it, for teachers in preparation, cannot occur too soon. The latest learning and teaching theories must be linked to practical classroom applications, not by telling students about them, but by helping them to apply methods and theories on their own in a real classroom.

Internship

Just as decisions regarding foundations requirements and curricula must be collaborative, so the internship experience must be also defined and supported. We agreed the internship experience is both necessary and critical. Colleges and universities, those presently responsible for placement and supervision, should

Take a Series of Coordinated Steps:

- ✓ **Identify proven performers (currently called cooperating teachers, master teachers, etc.)**
- ✓ **Determine clusters of these teachers by schools and districts**
- ✓ **From the above, develop collaborating "teams"**
- ✓ **Explore existing professional development arrangements such as CASDA, Hudson-Mohawk Consortium, Teacher Center to create a forum and a resource library**

  The forum will meet regularly to discuss issues (shared resumes, placement needs, funding potential for cooperative initiatives).

  The Resource library would include a compilation of individual cooperating teacher portfolios (vita, video, segment, teaching style) and guidelines for access and use.
- ✓ **Create a common designation of clinical adjunct faculty for cooperating teachers who will be involved in action research, seminars, etc.**
- ✓ **Deliberate and decide upon a full year internship with experiences in a variety of contexts such as elementary, secondary, urban, suburban/rural, different disciplines and teaching styles.**

With the support of the collaborating teams and the other above-mentioned resources, the cooperating teacher and the pre-service teacher will then together develop the following:

- ✓ **process for pre-service teacher's entry into the school culture**
- ✓ **co-teaching strategies**
- ✓ **reflective assessment processes**

Participants agreed that assessment of pre-service teachers — indeed — of all teachers must begin with the positive. Present day master teachers often feel judged when observers visit their classrooms. This harkens back to their first pre-service teaching experiences when they were judged and graded. At present a person wishing to be a teacher must pass through sometimes excruciating, judgment situations. We must structure internship experiences to avoid this so that we can encourage risk taking and reflection? Assessment of pre-service teachers should be *on-going* and continually ask the questions, *In what ways are you succeeding and why?* and *How can you improve?*

At the conclusion of the internship a committee of administrators-cooperating teachers could meet with the interns to evaluate the "final" experience and make recommendations. A chain of inter-school relationships; communications and experiences would be of value in providing an indication of future success.

Professional practice

Although students in teacher-preparation programs do graduate and internships do come to closure, the education and preparation of teachers never ends. Its very essence is one of learning and growth. One participant commented, "I really do not like the term 'teacher preparation'. 'Training' is even worse. I guess we need to look at the many possibilities of how to encourage life-long learners. I am most interested in what actually happens to classroom teachers that leads to life-long learning."

Teacher Development Is a Seamless Process...

Colleges and universities and the public schools should think of themselves as partners in the continual development of well prepared teachers. The college faculty and the school faculty should be working together throughout the year in both the on-going development of teacher education curricula and in the educational process of the schools.

Professional development is critical throughout a teaching career, and the first few years in the profession are pivotal. New teachers must have exposure to exemplary models that instill habits of lifelong reflection and learning. All schools have an obligation to provide access to such models in safe and nurturing learning environments.

Reflection and discussion must become part of the publicly perceived teacher job description.

It is not an easy task to develop such environments. Leadership is a necessary but not sufficient condition for establishing the proper climate; changes are needed in perceptions of education by parents and school boards, and even in expectations by students. Reflection and discussion must become part of the publicly perceived teacher job description. The old notion that if a teacher is not standing in front of a classroom talking, no teaching is taking place, must be discarded.

Seminar participants agreed that teachers should not feel isolated from those in other academic areas and levels. One participant compared a school to an ice cube tray with each cubicle being a classroom. Another participant noted that teacher sharing, meeting and

just plain talking are a rejuvenating experience too infrequently experienced by teachers.

Reflection discussions can provide on-going support and education. Teachers are able to share their experiences by speaking and writing. In today's world, classroom teachers often confront serious issues and bewildering dilemmas. They need to reflect upon and discuss these experiences with a broad "community" of resourceful people. In reflection, they share their concerns, frustrations, successes and hopes. They often come up with excellent suggestions for each other. These serve as a catalyst for independent research and study. Such professional education is self-directed and self-motivated and therefore meaningful and memorable. Another very valuable aspect of reflective teaching is that it points out the positive aspects of a teaching experience. Many teachers work in difficult circumstances and can be overwhelmed or disheartened by their experiences. Reflective discussion and study demands the examination of the teaching experience as a whole, thus reminding teachers of the very rewarding aspects of their work. Achieving school environments rich in opportunities for professional sharing and growth is only a first step toward effective teacher education. Is there a way to insure that teachers take advantage of appropriate and meaningful professional development opportunities? Can we provide incentives for teachers to take courses, seminars, etc. that build habits of lifelong commitment to professional development?

Finally, we need to insure that we do not build roadblocks or disincentives for teachers to participate in professional development opportunities. Barriers that stand in the way of encouraging/building reflective teaching include: districts cutting budgets by eliminating allocations for professional development (an alarming, recent trend), lack of available opportunities and/or information about opportunities, difficult time restraints, collegial pressure, insufficient people power to flexibly staff classrooms, unclear district expectations and assessment practices that stifle initiative and risk taking.

How do we break down the barriers so that teachers feel comfortable working with one another? Why are they often unable to admit strengths and weaknesses? Is it because of the way teachers/pre-service teachers have usually been involved in external evaluations? We need to involve teachers in more reflective modes of self-evaluation. This must be built into pre-service and on-going teacher development. One participant commented, "The most important thing that helped me improve my teaching was my colleagues. I was fortunate to work in team teaching situations throughout my career where the give and take between adults happened naturally and continuously. This raised the caliber of all team members."

The problem of lack of time for teachers to engage in professional communication and development was mentioned frequently. We must provide opportunities, not simply incentives, for reflection and engagement in serious conversation with other professionals. The nature/structure of schools as they now exist inhibits the idea of continuous professional development. We have assumed that new

We must provide opportunities, not simply incentives, for reflection and engagement in serious conversation with other professionals.

teachers can change/transform schools through the infusion of new and innovative practices into existing schools. It doesn't work. The structure of schooling (including relationships between teachers and administrators; the role of content knowledge; unquestioned, taken for granted aspects such as grades and ability grouping) is too entrenched for new teachers to be the transformative factor.

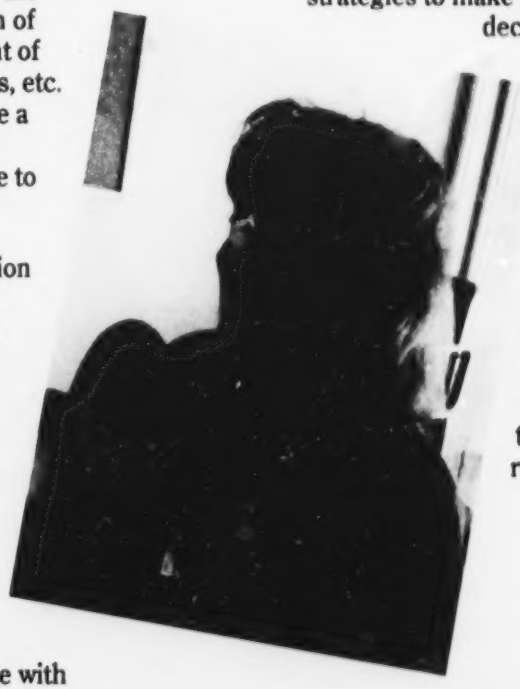
Continuous service preparation is — like collaboration or democracy — an idea that must be cultivated by people affected.

Therefore, just talking about preparing better/good teachers in the absence of talking about the structure of schools is nonsensical. Perhaps one of the most significant constraints is the social stratification of teachers and administrators with teachers occupying subordinate positions. This relationship is then manifested in how decisions are made, resulting in a hierarchical climate. Additionally, there are many structural aspects of schooling which are antithetical to professional development, e.g., the isolation of teachers, the definition of teacher work as time spent in front of children; arbitrary time allocations, etc. Both schools and universities have a responsibility for recreating the schools in ways that are conducive to professional development.

Continuous service preparation is — like collaboration or democracy — an idea that must be cultivated by people affected. It demands a localized "grassroots" connection. We felt there are crucial contextual requirements before discussing a continuous service preparation situation. Two such requirements are: (1) a network of commitment by peers that can create a common, clear set of expectations and intentions and (2) a school site with strong ethics to value the effort for continuous professional growth opportunities. As one participant noted, "School districts must be more effective in convincing their communities and boards of education of the long term benefits to the children they serve in order to enable them to dedicate considerable resources to teacher development..." (3) A third more personal requirement is a teacher's state-of-mind to think of self-inquiry as continuous, not periodic — that is to view a process of reflection as critical to teaching and a portfolio of steady accumulation as the evaluative end product.

Teaching is a profession that requires a life-time commitment to growth and development in a dynamic society. Teaching should no longer be viewed as a ten month profession but as a full-time year around profession. Within this framework, teachers should not only spend time in the classroom, but be given expanded opportunities to grow and develop through month long field courses, including classroom experience, research opportunities, and curriculum, instruction and evaluation retreats. For example, a workshop retreat on assessment could involve teachers from various disciplines taking time to construct authentic assessment portfolios and evaluate them. Field work could also include teachers working in different situations from their usual assignments, perhaps in diverse communities or different grade levels.

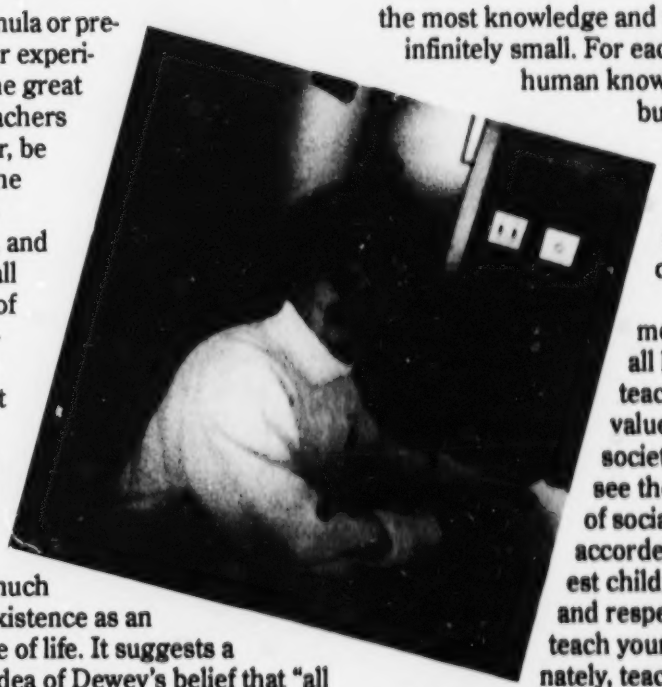
In the final analysis, teachers must understand that the best they can hope for is that they possess strategies to make thoughtful, informed teaching decisions. They must accept that they are teaching in a world where society's problems are having a greater impact on schools and on students. Many problems that students face cannot be solved in the classroom. Nevertheless, teachers who are reflective and dedicated to a life-time of growth and development will know that they are striving to provide the best possible conditions for learning in the classroom.



The children ...
Are our hope
And we are theirs.
Cesar A. Perales

Reflections on the profession of teaching

There isn't any formula or prescription, set of courses or experiences that will produce the great or even good teacher. Teachers must, like the philosopher, be people who believe that the highest purpose for us as human beings is to know, and that is through living, in all that life requires of each of us, that we fulfill that purpose. The goal of life and the means for achieving it are one in the same. To know is to live and to live is to know. The cartesian postulate "*Cogito ergo sum*," "I think therefore I am," is perhaps not so much an attempt at a proof of existence as an affirmation of the purpose of life. It suggests a further extension of the idea of Dewey's belief that "all education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience; that the process and the goal of education are one and the same thing."



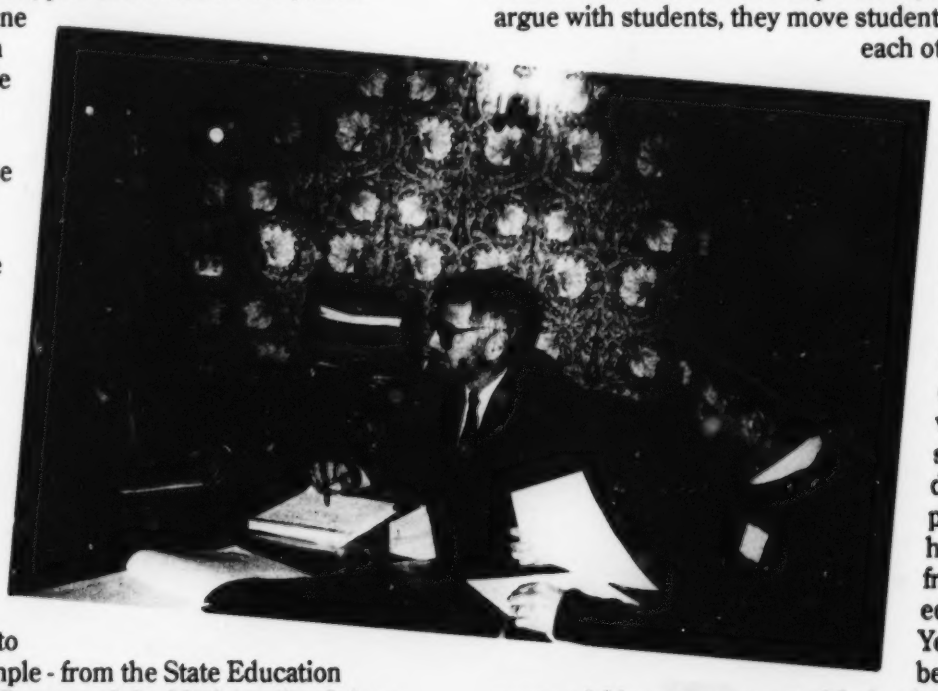
In the final analysis, the difference between the amount of knowledge acquired by those who acquire the most knowledge and those who acquire the least is infinitely small. For each age, the aggregate of human knowledge appears impressive, but it too being small, should serve only to have us stop to celebrate the wonder of the universe in which we live and our puzzlement about the consequence of our existence.

Teaching a child is the most profoundly significant of all human activity and thus teachers ought to be the most valued and respected members of society. It would be interesting to see the effect if the highest degree of social value and respect were accorded those who teach the youngest children and great but lesser value and respect were accorded those who teach young and older adults. Unfortunately, teaching is not a highly esteemed activity, and teaching the very young is the least valued. By their public statements, those in positions of authority often would have us believe otherwise. Thomas Sowell commented in his 1994 New Year'sDay column, "To hear yet another university president say

that teaching is going to be emphasized more, instead of letting research become an obsession, is like watching the Nazi officer draw his luger knowing that he is going to be shot dead by Humphrey Bogart."

A convincing case can be made that research must be accorded the highest priority at a research university, like our own, and at other similar institutions. However, unless the value and relationship of teaching to scholarship is understood and appreciated at our good research universities and it is accorded, at least, equal status with research, the society will never value teaching or teachers beyond the level they are currently valued.

As a society, we should stand in awe of the master teachers who populate our elementary and secondary school classrooms. They are present in every school district in greater numbers than is publicly acknowledged and they, like the great teachers at universities, possess in abundance, those qualities that one associates with scholars. These great teachers are the most precious gift we can offer our children.



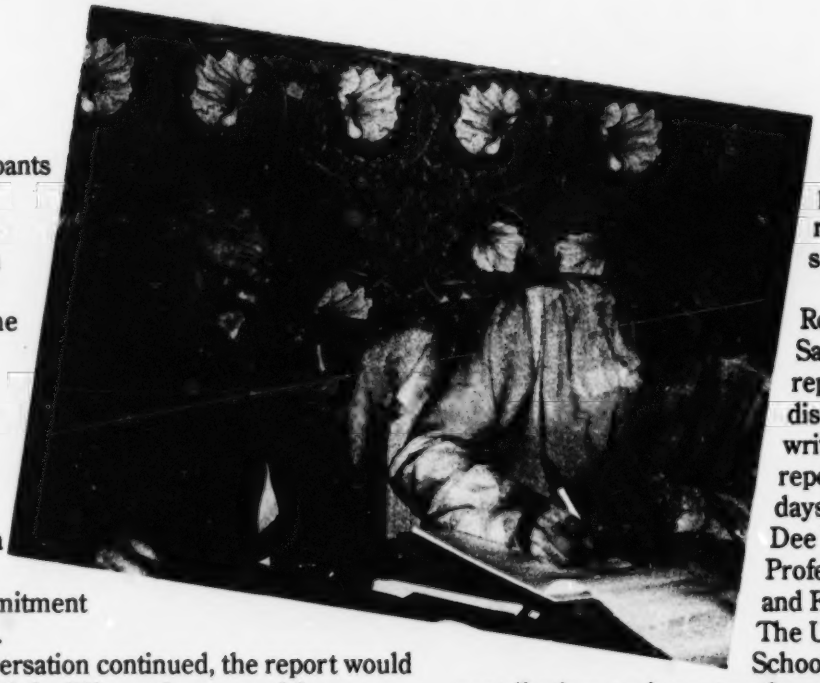
There are still far too many people who have never taught or who have taught only briefly trying to tell them, without any meaningful consultation, what and how to teach. An example - from the State Education Department's *Framework for Mathematics, Science and Technology*— "We need to encourage teachers to view themselves as expert and lifelong learners. Teachers need to change from being a 'a sage on the stage.' The teacher should be a 'guide on the side.'" This catchy phrasing is but another reflection of bureaucratic and societal anti-intellectualism — patronizing, condescending and wrong. Great teachers are indeed both "sages on the stage" and "guides on the side" always, concurrently, artfully. They are people who have not only studied long and hard the disciplines they teach, but through the years, they have continued to read and, more important, think and think and think about their disciplines. Even then, they realize that what they know is but a piece of the whole.

Perceptive students want for themselves all the wisdom and knowledge that their teachers have accumulated. They have only a casual interest in what their fellow students think about the subject. At the same time, a seeming contradiction, some of the students' best learning comes as a result of discussing and arguing about ideas, preparing papers and presentations, completing projects and working on homework problems with their classmates in preparation for that event called class where the teacher reigns supreme. Great teachers have very little tolerance if that work is not prepared. Those same teachers also engage students in debate, provide guidance for student work—or not—depending on the degree of struggle and challenge they wish to provide. Sometimes they provide students with clear goals at the beginning of a lesson—sometimes not. They lecture, they test, they argue with students, they move students to argue with each other. They challenge students, they encourage them, they chastise them. They read and react to students' papers and collect and correct homework and sometimes they do not. They are people who have received from their own education what Yehuda Reinharz believes all successful learners get out of their education. "It's very rarely a matter that they learned in any particular course. It's the ability to analyze information and to convey information, to deal with complex ideas, quantitative data, to make connections among what might seem to be very disparate ideas to other people that are actually related to one another."

Great teachers use their disciplines, whatever they may be, to do that. To do that, you first have to know your discipline very well....very well and then a whole lot more. How do we prepare great teachers? Ask the great teachers and trust them. There is no other way.

Nelson Armlin

Afterword



The participants in the 1994 Select Seminar on Excellence in Education examined a most important issue: the preparation of teachers. This report allows the reader to get a sense of the seriousness of the conversation and a flavor of the intensity and commitment of the participants.

Had the conversation continued, the report would have been only slightly different because of the unanimity of the participants on this subject, a rare occurrence at a select seminar.

We thank Jean Rose and Arlene Mernit Sampson for writing the report based on the discussions, individual writings, and group reports during the five days. We also thank Dr. Dee Warner, Director of Professional Development and Field Experience at The University at Albany's School of Education, for contributions and constructive suggestions.

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